

Chief Ignatius Petoskey
Also known as Petosega, Biidassige,
or Nevas Peto-sega {Rising Sun}
1787 -- 1885

SCULPTURE OF CHIEF IGNATIUS PETOSKEY
Also known as **PETOSEGA, BIDASSIGE, or PETO-SEGA {RISING SUN}**
Located on a hillside overlooking Little Traverse Bay
Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan



The sun still shines on the face of Petoskey's founder. Photo by Peg Muzzall

IGNATIUS PETOSKEY
PETOSKEY, EMMET COUNTY, MICHIGAN

On the trail of Chief Petosegay
Written by Robert Downes
July 9, 2005

All forms of artistic creations contain some form of symbolism and added meaning. The same is true in this creation by **Pietro Vinotti**. This statue of **Ignatius Petoskey** contains many symbolic elements which must be explained to the non-historian or those inexperienced the **Anishnabe** culture of the 19th century **Great Lakes Region**.

The statue in whole is made of bronze with a green patina to mimic natural weathering. Its height is 6 feet from base to top. It was created using the lost wax process of casting by the **Petrucci Foundry** of **Clarkston, Michigan**. The statue was placed in this location on land donated by the city of **Petoskey** to honor the **ogema** {headman} who once held title to all the land for many miles around **Petoskey**.

While facing the statue many symbolic features become evident. Starting with the face, the artist carved the face to appear as though **Ignatius** was in his prime near 50 years of age. His face is very powerful and forward looking. He is dressed in attire of the late 19th century and its demand for conformity and assimilation. This type of clothing was chosen to present **Ignatius** as a man of transition between the ancient **Anishnabe** world and the **American** society of his day.

Moving down the statue, two necklaces are prominently placed around his neck. The first is the **Peace Medallion** given dignitaries, ogema and negotiators during the era of his lifetime. As an **ogema** he participated in many negotiations and agreements with the **United States government**. This symbol was chosen to accentuate his desire for peaceful relations between the two cultures in which he lived and conducted business.

The second necklace of **Bear Claws** and **Fur** represent his work during the **Fur Trading** era of his youth. It commemorates his prowess as a hunter, trapper and provider for his family.

Both of his hands hold special and sacred objects. His right hand grasps a fan of **Honor Feathers**. This symbol is still viewed in the **Anishnabe** culture as a means to show honor to veterans, elders, country, flag and ancestors.

In his left hand he cradles a **Pipe**. As an **ogema**, the use of tobacco was a key element during negotiations and times of decision making. The pipe contains the **Bear Motif** again to express the power, determination and wisdom that **Ignatius** undoubtedly possessed during his long life and service to his people.

Around his waist and tied off to one side is a finger woven **Sash Belt**. Wore by both **Anishnabe** and **French Traders** of the time, the belt was often given as a gift and were made of brightly colored dyed yarn.

Slung over his left shoulder and running to his waist is a **Bandolier Bag**. Used both prehistorically and historically, these bags were made to supplement the lack of pockets in every day clothing. During the historical period the bags became highly artistic in color and design. Such decorative bags were given to honor someone of their deeds. These bags served both practical and spiritual purposes depending on their content. On **Ignatius'** bag the relief of a **Rooster** was carved into the design. The **Rooster** was created from the symbol associated with **Ignatius'** name on a letter dating from the 1830s. The **Rooster** is a symbol used to denote the **French** who lived and traded with the **Anishnabe** of the region.

The final symbol incorporated on this statue is the **Moccasins** upon his feet. These were carved with exacting detail from a pair of **Ignatius'** personal moccasins on display at the **Little Traverse Historical Museum of Petoskey, Michigan**. The **Floral Pattern** is typical of the **Anishnabe** cultural motifs and symbol of his walk both in the **Anishnabe** and **Non-Native World**.

CHIEF IGNATIUS PETOSKEY SCULPTOR DEDICATION

By **Jeremy McBain,**
Petoskey News-Review Staff Writer
July 11, 2005

James and Roland Petoskey found themselves once again looking up at the image of their grandfather, **Ignatius Petoskey**, Saturday on hillside overlooking **Little Traverse Bay**.

As cameras flashed, the two men stood quietly at the foot of a 6 foot tall bronze statue of their grandfather at the corner of **Lewis and Rose streets** in **Petoskey**, the city of his name.

"It's the most impressive thing I've ever seen. I know who he is and who he was, this is a tribute to the man he was," James, 91, of Wisconsin, said.

Roland, 72, dressed in traditional headgear and clothing, said, *"I am glad I am here with you today to celebrate my grandfather."*

More than 100 of **Ignatius** relatives attended the ceremony Saturday, along with many other residents, visitors and members of the **Little Traverse Historical Society** and members of the **Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians**.

One of those relatives, **Warren Petoskey, of Harbor Springs,** elders coordinator of the **Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians,** said the event and statue was important to the family and the tribe because it recognizes **Ignatius** role in the area. **Warren** is the great-great-grandson of **Ignatius**. *"It is an excellent statue,"* he added.

Mary Ann Roberts of Brutus, another relative of **Ignatius,** said she thinks the statue is beautiful. *"It certainly is a fine tribute to {Ignatius} Petoskey to be standing over the bay he loved and adored. It is impressive,"* she said.

The ceremony included speeches from tribal members, historical society members and others, as well as traditional drumming and music.

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Chair Frank Ettawageshik said, *"I know the community of native people numbered up to 30,000 at its peak. The population here is just now starting to approach what it used to be,"* he said. **Ettawageshik** talked about the feeling he and many other **Native Americans** get when they come to **Petoskey,** see the bay and the hills over-looking it. It is going to be fitting that this statue stands here. *Hopefully {Ignatius} Petoskey has that same feeling as he looks out over this place, this bay, we call Home,* he said.

Robert Dau, a **Petoskey** native who lives in **Illinois,** and his wife, **Nancy,** donated the statue through a grant to the historical society. *"The fact that my name is a footnote on this statue is the greatest honor I could have,"* he said. **Dau** praised the sculptor of the statue, **Melrose Township sculptor Pietro Vinotti,** saying he is

to sculpting as *"Hemingway is to writing."* The statue was originally created in wood by **Vinotti** and reproduced in bronze by **Michael Petrucci's Fine Arts Sculpture Center** in **Clarkston**.

Ettawageshik said the striking piece shows **Ignatius** as a man with one foot in both the **Indian** world and the **American** world of the time. **Ignatius** is shown wearing **European** style clothing, but with **Indian** elements mixed in. since he is facing the bay, the clothing was carved to look like it is blowing in the wind.

The **Indian** elements he has with him include a **Peace Medallion** given to dignitaries, ogemarks and negotiators during his lifetime. It was chosen to show his desire for peaceful relations between the two cultures in which he lived and did business.

In his right hand, he is shown holding a **Pipe**. Tobacco was a key element in negotiations. The **Pipe** also has a **Bear Motif** to express the power, determination and wisdom **Ignatius** is believed to have had during his life.

Around his waist, **Ignatius** has a finger woven **Sash Belt**. This was worn by both **Indian** and **French Traders** of the time and was often given as a gift.

On his feet, the statue shown **Ignatius** wearing **Moccasins**. These were carved from a pair of **Ignatius** personal **Moccasins** on display at the **Little Traverse Historical Museum** in **Petoskey**.

The statue sits on a piece of land donated by the city of **Petoskey** to honor **Ignatius,** who, along with his sons, once owned most of the land **Petoskey** is located upon. The city also provided a stone and concrete base, as well as landscaping around the statue.

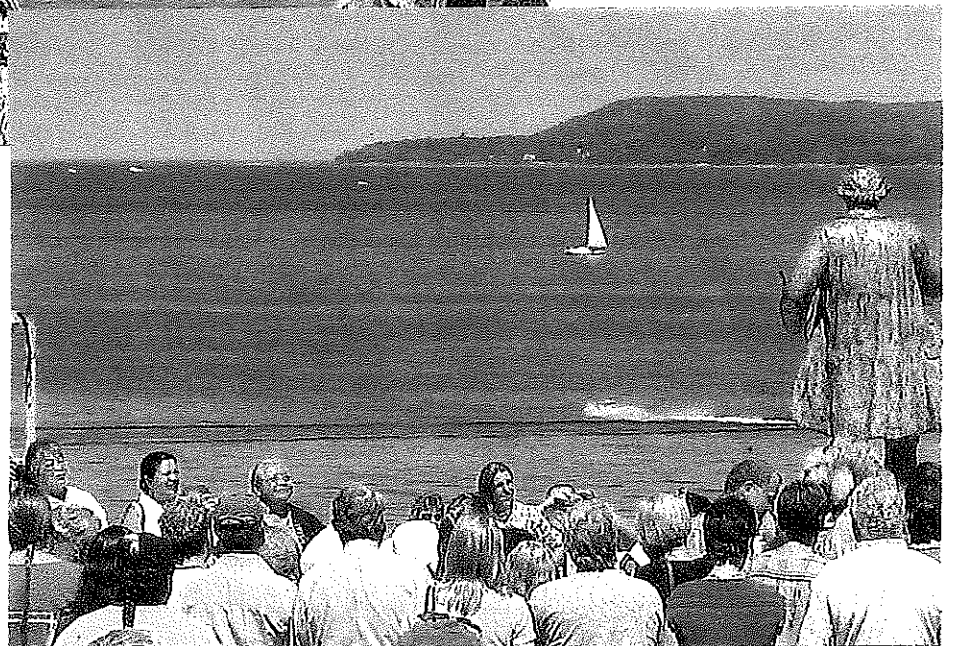
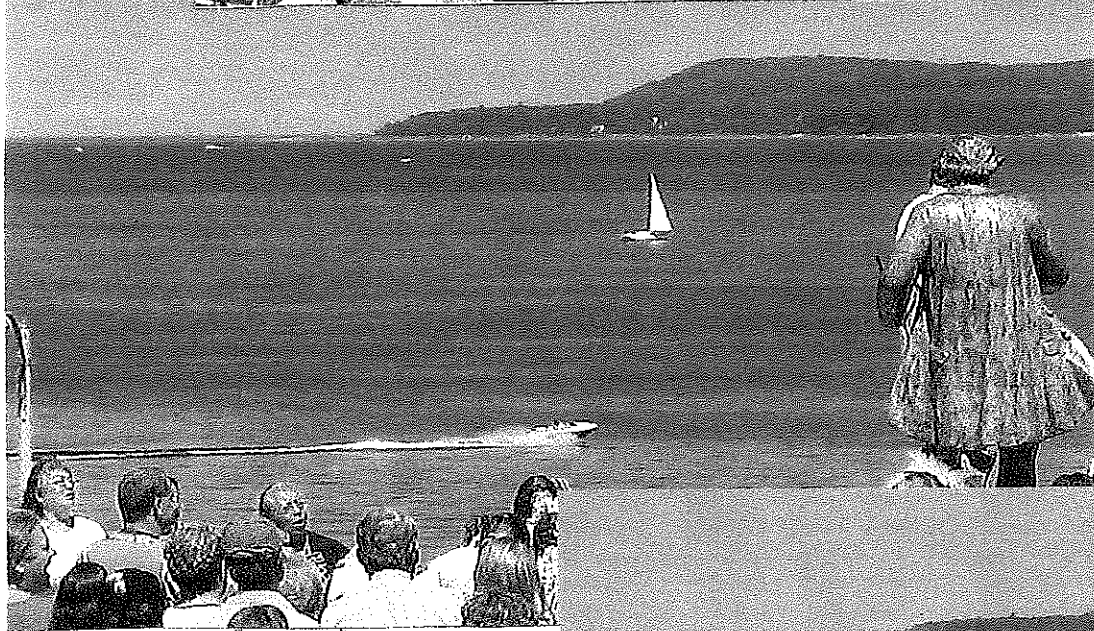
Ignatius was born in the spring of 1787 and spent much of his early life near **Harbor Springs**. Following a dispute with the local **Catholic** community about his children's education, he moved his residence across the **Little Traverse Bay**

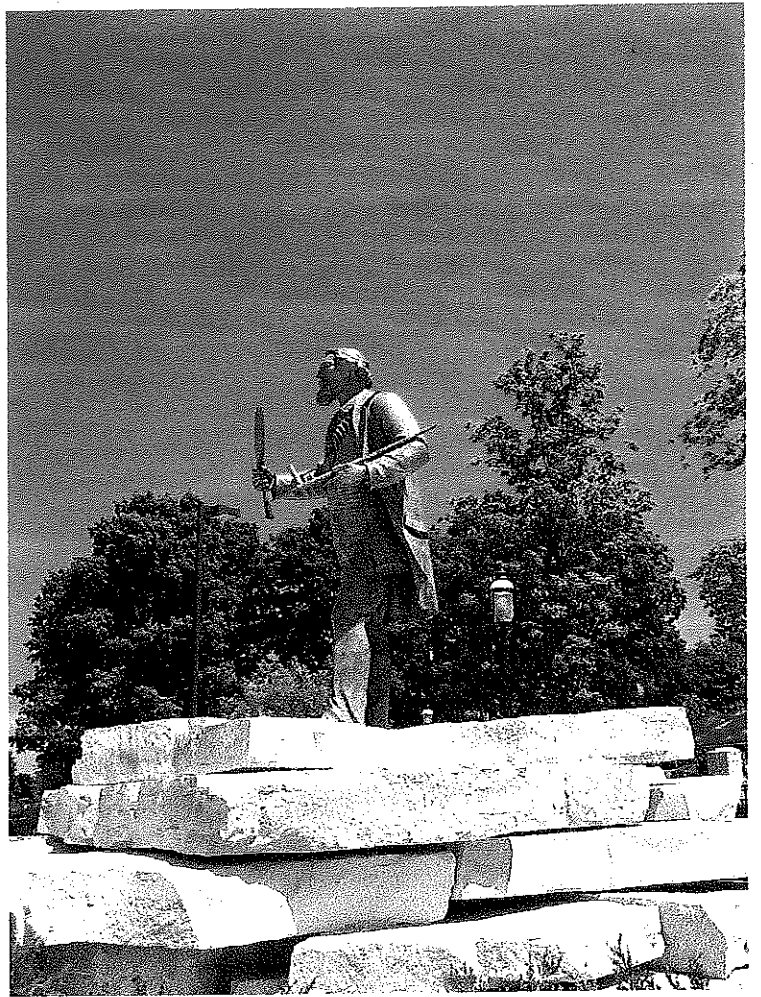
He was known for his skill as a tribal leader and success in business. He served as a fur buyer for **John Jacob Astor's Company** and a merchant.

Ignatius died in 1885 at the age of 98. He is buried in **Greenwood Cemetery** in **Petoskey**.



CHIEF IGNATIUS PETOSKEY SCULPTOR DEDICATION





IGNATIUS PETOSKEY {NEYAS PETOSEGA}

Extracted from Find-A-Grave files

The large concourse of citizens which attended the funeral services of Chief Petoskey, on Sunday, indicates so general an interest in him and his romantic story, that it is fitting recall to remembrance the principal events of his long life. Ninety-three years ago-in 1787-at or near the mouth of the Manistee river, he was born, as his parents were returning from a hunting expedition to the home of the tribe north of Little Traverse Bay. He was born just as the beams of the morning sun were gilding with gold the eastern hills, and so he was named Neyas Pe-to-se-ga, "The Rising Sun."

His boyhood was spent in the lodge of his father Neetooshing about seven miles northwest of Harbor Springs not far from the present Indian town of Middle Village. When twenty-one years of age he took for his wife Kewaykabawikwa, the daughter of a neighbor and the gnarled and twisted trunks of the apple trees they planted seventy-six years ago may yet be seen in that vicinity. The Jesuit missionaries recognizing the natural abilities and forecasting the probable personal influence of the young chief, persuaded him that part of his name-Neyas- was an abbreviation of Ignatius the given name of their great leader Loyola; and from forth Petosega wrote himself Ignatius.

When the government first entered upon the experiment of schooling Indian children, Petosega sent his two oldest boys to a school in Ohio; but the Jesuits discovering that the school was under Protestant auspices ordered him to bring the boys away or suffer excommunication. His wife sided with the Jesuits, and reluctantly Petosega yielded; but the Jesuits had made, with a man of the proud and independent character of Petosega, a blunder fatal to their influence in future. At that time the Jesuits were all powerful with the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Ojibwas of Northern Michigan; and Petosega, his eyes opened to the intolerance and tyrannical bigotry of the Jesuit missionaries, and desiring to remove from that immediate neighborhood and influence, emigrated to the southern shore of Little Traverse Bay, and with his elder sons acquired most of the lands upon which the village of Petoskey now stands. The establishment of the Presbyterian Mission upon the farm now owned by Nathan Jarman, just west of the village, by Andrew Porter in 1852 gave Petosega the opportunity for which he had patiently waited, of declaring his independence of the Jesuits and he and his children became attendants at the services of the Mission and thenceforward were its supporters and friends. The effort of the Jesuits to regain their influence over the Indians south of the Bay which they had lost in their

attempted Bull-dozing of Petosega by establishing a mission on the south side of the Bay proved a failure; and not a few of the Indians retained the Catholic faith the potential influence of Petosega freed them from the superstition which had made the Indians veritable slaves of the Jesuit fathers. When the white emigration to that region began in 1873 and a name was sought for the new settlement the name of the Chieftan who owned the lands-Petosega-was changed in the spelling (though but little in the sound) to Petoskey, and adopted.

The chief as a matter of compliment to his white friends thereafter wrote his name Petoskey. In 1881 his wife Kewaykabawikwa died being eighty-six years of age, and since that time he has made his home with his daughter who is the wife of Moses Waukazoo and a lady respected and loved by the people of Petoskey. Though for two or three years past very feeble in health, he has been made comfortable by the filial affection and ceaseless care of his daughter and other children.-
Petoskey Record. June 27, 1885



Chief Ignatius Petoskey

IMPRESSIVE

The Petoskey Record

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June 6, 1912

Last Thursday was Decoration Day, and exercises for the honored dead of the Civil War and for the veterans who still remain from the terrible struggle, were of the best ever held in Petoskey. The parade in the morning was very interesting, the only part not there, which has always been seen on former Decoration Days, being the school children. This year exercises were held in both the Catholic and Public schools on Wednesday afternoon instead of having the children march in the parade.

The line of the parade was formed on Division Street and the old soldiers, sixty in number, accompanied by the band, the Women's Relief Corps, the Boy Scouts, Mayor Sly, as president of the day; Henry Sweeny, orator of the day, and Rev. W. E. Graham, marched down Mitchell street and making a detour around the one block between Petoskey and Emmet streets, arrived at the bridge where the veterans were taken in automobiles to the cemetery.

The exercises were very pretty and touching and were of great interest to all those who honor the old soldiers and those who died for their country in that terrible war of '61 - '65.

Those who made the trip to the cemetery were more than well paid in the address of Henry S. Sweeny, orator of the day, who gave briefly the causes of the war and after reviewing the great struggle, spoke of the rapid progress of our nation since the close of the war. He told of the meaning of Memorial Day and of the flag and, in fact, gave one of the best Decoration Day addresses ever heard in Petoskey.

Following the exercises at the monument another interesting part of the program was given when a large boulder, weighing nearly six tons, was dedicated by Pe-to-se-ga chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, at the grave of Ignatius Pe-to-se-ga, the Indian Chief after whom the city of Petoskey is named.

The dedication address was made by Rev. Graham, of the Presbyterian Church, in which was reviewed the life, especially the latter years, of old Chief Pe-to-se-ga. Following the address

the boulder was unveiled by Mrs. Reusch organizing regent, and Mrs. J. M. Shields, regent-elect of the chapter, and Mrs. O. L. Ramsdell, outgoing regent, presented the boulder in behalf of the chapter to Mayor Sly who accepted it in behalf of the city.

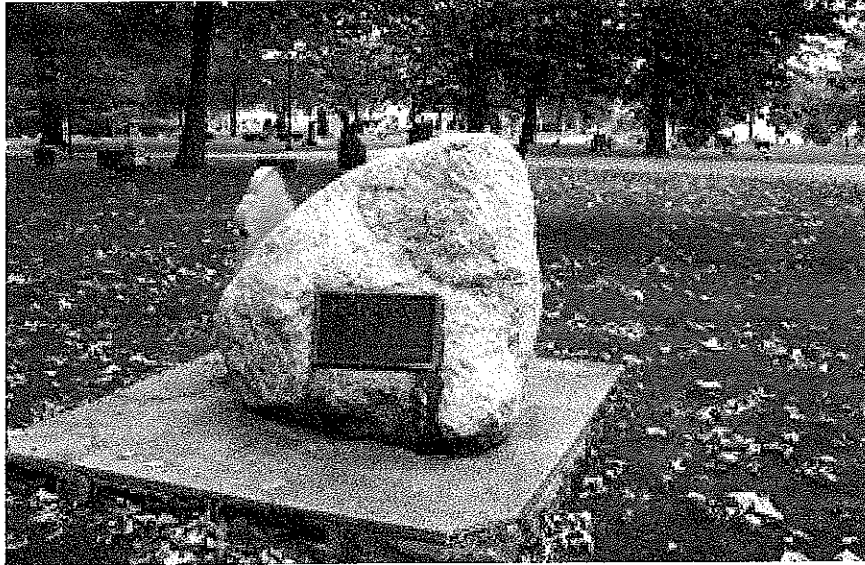
The boulder was given to the chapter by Mr. Nathan Jarman and was taken from the Jarman farm in the southwest part of the city. Old Chief Pe-to-se-ga undoubtedly often rested beside this boulder while journeying about that section during his residence on this side of the bay, making it a very appropriate monument at his last resting place.

The old residents of Petoskey remember this venerable red man well. He came to Petoskey from Harbor Springs in the early days, having been one of the first prominent converts to the Protestant faith at the mission of Andrew Porter in Petoskey. He was in fact the real founder, the Indian founder of Petoskey, sharing the honors of founding the city with the late Capt. H. O. Rose, who purchased land of him for the first plot of Petoskey. Lot one of this plot is now occupied by the building in which the Northern Hardware is located.

As a boy Chief Pe-to-se-ga was a warrior and fought in many battles in Michigan and Ohio for the English armies. After he grew to full manhood he was won over to the cause of the United States and since that time and until his death, in 1881, he was one of the most influential citizens of this section. For some time he was one of the trusted clerks for the fur traders at Mackinac Island and there learned much of the ways of the white men and it was this training that made him the leader among his people. At the exercises at his grave, last Thursday, was his only remaining son, Enos Petoskey; several grandsons and many great grandchildren.

The Petoskey City Band, which furnished the music for the Decoration Day Exercises, rendered an appropriate program of music at the dedicating exercises.

Decoration Day, 1912
Boulder, weighing nearly six tons, dedicated by
PE-TO-SE-GA Chapter, Daughters of the American Legion, at grave of
Ignatius PE-TO-SE-GA. Indian Chief whom the city of Petoskey is named
Boulder donated by Mr. Nathan Jarman
Taken from Jarman farm in the Southwest part of the city



Ignatius Petoskey {Neyas Petosega} Grave Site
Greenwood Cemetery, Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan
Section D, Block 14, Lot 11



In Memory of
PE-TO-SE-GA
Born 1787
Died 1884
Erected by
PE-TO-SE-GA Chapter
D. A. R.